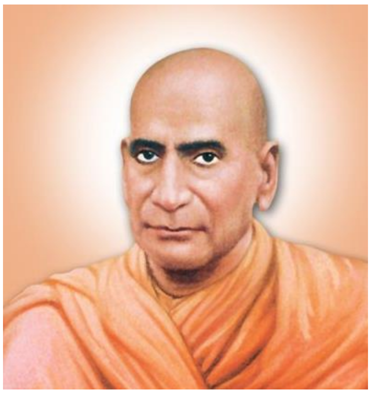
SWAMI SHRADDHANAND

(February 22, 1856 – December 23, 1926)



Swami Shraddhanand was one of the few eminent builders of the Indian nation …a valiant warrior of the war of independence …a living portrait of bravery and sacrifice …a symbol of renunciation and penance …a noble soul and fearless patriot. He found 'irresistible' the call of Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati to live and preach the universal ideals of the Vedic Dharma, and to serve the Arya Samaj, India and humanity.

The Gurukul Kangri at Haridwar which he founded stands as a towering centre of learning in line with the ideals of the Vedic rishis (seers) to produce exemplary citizens imbued with the ancient Vedic ideals as change agents for a new national outlook. He had founded several other institutions for the uplift of the social, moral and cultural status of the people of India, and focused on education for girls and womenfolk.

He initiated the *Shuddhi* movement whereby converted people were accepted back as Hindus after the '*Shuddhi Sanskara*'. He conferred the title of 'Mahatma" to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi when the latter visited Gurukul Kangri after his return from South Africa. However, he withdrew his support to Congress due to ideological differences with M.K. Gandhi on the '*Ghar vaapasi*' programme. Gandhiji had called upon him to put an end to the *Shuddhi* movement and refused to ask Christians and Muslims to stop converting Hindus to their faith.

He founded two prominent dailies: '*Tej*' in Urdu and '*Arjun*' in Hindi. He plunged headlong into the agitation with a lead role in infusing life into the people, and organised '*hartals*' and protests against the Rowlatt Act enacted by the British Government. He was a valiant Arya Sanyasi who served the people without any distinction of caste or creed. He had the unique honour of preaching to the Muslims, starting with Vedic hymns, from the pulpit of the greatest and the most famous mosque of India, the Delhi Jama Masjid.

Bare-breast, he dared soldiers who threatened to fire at the crowd to shoot him. He was the architect of the historic Congress session at Amritsar when Punjab was writhing under the atrocities by the British Government under martial law and initiated the programme for eradication of untouchability which was adopted.

He always stood at the forefront of the Arya Samaj movement, made the Arya Samaj a centre of power and contributed to its popularity by his disinterested work and exemplary practical life. As towering personality and a source of eternal inspiration, he lived up to a martyr's death while on his sick bed and died at the gun shots of a misguided assassin on 23 December 1926.

Tributes to Swami Shraddhanand

- …a firebrick in the furnace of Maharishi Dayanand (**दयानन्द की भट्टी में ईंट**)
- …the crown jewel of the Gurukula system of education and the return of people misled by conversion (**गुरुकुलीय व्यवस्था, शुद्धि आंदोलन का गौरव**)
- …proved his mettle by living as per the teachings of the Vedas and seers / rishis (**मन वाणी और शरीर से ऋषि परम्परा को साकार किया**)
- …gave new direction to society though his thoughts, words and deeds (**अपने विचारों और कार्यों से समाज को नया दिशा दिया**)
- …an ideal statesman in whose life each word, incident or action left its imprint on stone (**ऐसे आदर्श महापुरुष जिसके जीवन में हर एक शब्द, घटना व काम पत्थर पे लकीर जैसा बन जाता था**)
- …unmoved by critics, blame, rejection, and defamation, he was focused on objectives (**निन्दा बहिष्कार अपमान भी हुवा लेकिन लक्ष्य को नहीं छोड़ा**)

Acharya Bramdeo MOKOONLALL
Atlanta, USA

To know more, please watch the movie **Aahwaan** (The Call of Truth), *biography of Swami Shraddhanand*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJyidZTD4Qk